EVALUATING BASIC EDUCATION IN SINGAPORE: TRENDS AND DYNAMICS

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Abstract:
This paper set out to evaluate the trends and dynamics of basic education in Singapore. It explored the country's emphasis on a refined learning system in primary and secondary schools, efficient human resources policies, and state-of-the-art tools. This study provided thorough explanations and content analysis of the trends and dynamics of basic education in Singapore about curriculum design, teaching methods, special needs, and student achievement; pre-service teachers' training, teachers' professional development, and teachers' effectiveness; as well as school leadership and community participation. Results indicated that Singapore's basic education has provided a roadmap for success in building competent life-long learners. In conclusion, this study provides evidence that policymakers, planners, and educators from developing countries can take inspiration from Singapore to better their educational systems and stave off pertinent challenges.

Keywords: *Basic Education, Trends and Dynamics, Ministry of Education, National Institute of Education, Students, Teachers*

INTRODUCTION

Singapore has a well-established basic education system that is known for its high academic standards and innovative teaching methods. The government of Singapore places a strong emphasis on education, and as a result, the country has consistently ranked among the top performers in international assessments of student achievement. A few publications of recent attest to this fact. One recent work on basic education in Singapore is the book chapter "Singapore's 'Struggle' for Independence and Educational Policy Implications" by the trio of

Yeow-Tong Chia, Alistair Chew, and Jason Tan. This book chapter provides a snapshot history of education in Singapore, from its colonial roots to the present day.

It examines the key policies and initiatives that have shaped the basic education system in Singapore and explores the challenges that educators and policymakers face as they strive to maintain and improve the quality of education in the country (Chia et al., 2021). Another recent work on basic education in Singapore is the book chapter "Developing Twenty-First-Century Skills for Future Jobs and Societies" by Andreas Schleicher. This research examines the vocational education and training (VET) system in Singapore, which is widely regarded as one of the best in the world. The research looks at how Singapore has developed a VET system that is responsive to changing economic needs and provides insights into how other countries can learn from Singapore's experience (Schleicher, 2020). A third recent work on basic education in Singapore is the dissertation "Seeking Universal Education: From Singapore's Educational Success" by Gulnar Rzayeva.

This research provides an overview of the key features of the education system in Singapore, including its focus on academic excellence, bilingualism, and character development. It also examines some of the criticisms that have been leveled against the system, such as its emphasis on standardized testing and rote learning (Rzayeva, 2021). A fourth recent work on basic education is the book "Education in Singapore: People-Making and Nation-Building in Singapore" by Yew-Jin Lee. It discusses the role of education in the development of Singapore as a nation. It explores the history, policies, and practices of basic education in Singapore, including the curriculum, teaching methods, and assessment systems (Y.-J. Lee & Ho, 2022). The book also examines the challenges and opportunities facing the education system in Singapore as it continues to evolve and adapt to changing social, economic, and technological trends. It is premised on the foregoing that this paper has been designed to contribute to the paucity of literature on the giant strides of Singapore's basic educational system with a focus on exploring the trends and dynamics for policymakers and policy planners in education as well as educators in strategic and tactical personnel management to benefit, especially in developing countries.

It is an open secret that the extent of any country's development is proportional to its level of basic education as disclosed by Fägerlind (2016) as well as Adesina (2011). Thus, as much as basic education is at the lower cadre of the educational system world over, it remains the incontrovertible cornerstone of educational development. It is the definition of how solid the foundation of a nation's educational system is and an item of high priority on the list of measurement and evaluation of human capital development in any given country. Hence, evaluating basic education is vital to policymakers, policy planners, and other critical stakeholders in education and national development because it is the process of assessing the effectiveness and efficiency of educational policy that aims to provide students with fundamental knowledge and skills in various subjects such as reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies as it relates to their countries national goals and objectives in line with meeting global

demands. The evaluation process involves collecting and analyzing data to determine whether the implemented educational policy is achieving its intended outcomes and meeting the needs of students, teachers, and other stakeholders (Parra & Edwards Jr, 2023);(Carlson et al., 2011). The evaluation of basic education can be done at different levels, including the individual student level, classroom level, school level, district level, state level, and national level (Scheerens, 2023).

Educational evaluation is indeed a well-defined concept in the context of assessing the various aspects of education, teaching, and learning outcomes. It is crucial for ensuring continuous improvement, good decision-making, and accountability among educational institutions, educators, and stakeholders. The measures and dimensions of educational evaluation help in understanding its essential components and methodologies. Osiesi (2023) and Thomas (2023), thought that the measures of educational evaluation comprise formative evaluation, summative evaluation, diagnostic evaluation, self-evaluation, and peer evaluation while Wade (2023) as well as Choy and Cheung (2022) remarked that the dimensions of educational evaluation are made up of learning process, instructional effectiveness, learning outcomes, engagement and motivation, as well as assessment and feedback. Osiesi (2023) noted that formative evaluation occurs during the instructional process to improve the learning experience, curriculum, and teaching methods. Educators use real-time feedback to identify areas that need adjustment, adaptation, or reinforcement.

Thomas (2023) observed that summative evaluation is often conducted at the end of a study module, course, or program and this type of educational evaluation aims to assess learning outcomes and overall achievement. It includes tests, exams, essays, projects, or other assignments that demonstrate or validate students' skills, knowledge, and understanding of the subject matter. Osiesi (2023) added that diagnostic evaluation entails the use of tests or assessments to identify students' skills, strengths, and weaknesses. These insights derived from the diagnostic evaluation can be used to develop tailored education plans or strategic personnel management in education that cater to individual needs and learning styles. Similarly, Pitkänen (2023) remarked that self-evaluation encourages students to reflect on their performance, identify areas for growth, and set personal goals to improve their learning experience while peer evaluation implies the development of student's critical thinking and collaboration skills by assessing their peers' work. Peer evaluation can be useful as feedback from educators might sometimes seem one-sided. Referring to the dimensions of educational evaluation, Wade (2023) observed that evaluating the learning process involves analyzing the techniques, resources, materials, and strategies used by the teachers to facilitate learning, as well as the level of engagement and participation of the students while in evaluating the instructional effectiveness, the quality of instruction, including lesson planning, content delivery, and learning materials are usually assessed. Notably, the dimensions of evaluating the learning process and instructional effectiveness seek to ensure that the set educational objectives are being met effectively. In terms of learning outcomes as a dimension of evaluating education, Wade (2023) in agreement

with Choy and Cheung (2022) remarked that it refers to assessing the degree to which students achieve the desired learning goals or outcomes – the knowledge, skills, and competencies acquired by students to succeed both in their academic pursuits and future careers.

In addition, Furrer (2014) thought that evaluating student engagement and motivation checks how dedicated and committed students are to their learning process. It aims to identify ways to stimulate students' interest and maintain their involvement in learning activities while the assessment and feedback dimension involves assessing the accuracy, reliability, and relevance of the tools and methods used to measure student performance, along with the effectiveness of the feedback provided in a bid to improve the learning experience. More so, Bairašauskienė (2017) acknowledged that in the conceptual clarification of educational evaluation, there is a dimension of institutional quality to it. Bairašauskienė (2017) noted that evaluating the school or institution's infrastructure, resources, and overall management enables the identification of areas that need improvement, thus ensuring the overall quality of education offered. In addition, Karimi (2021) noted that there is a dimension of stakeholder satisfaction in evaluating education. The author observed that stakeholder satisfaction aims to gauge the satisfaction levels of students, parents, teachers, and other stakeholders involved in the educational process. Their feedback and opinions can help drive improvements and ensure the quality of educational experiences. Their feedback and opinions can help drive improvements and ensure the quality of educational experiences.

METHOD

At each level, different evaluation methods and tools may be used to assess various aspects of the educational policy implementation such as curriculum design, teaching methods, student performance, teacher effectiveness, school leadership, and community involvement (Granziera et al., 2023);(Scheerens, 2023). One common evaluation method used in basic education is standardized testing (Chang, 2023). Standardized tests are designed to measure students' knowledge and skills in specific subject areas and provide a standardized way of comparing student performance across different schools and districts (Pirbalouti et al., 2023);(Tienken, 2023). Other evaluation methods include classroom observations Soo (2023), surveys of students and teachers Diamah (2023), interviews with school administrators and community members Mykrä (2023); Uliassi (2023), and analysis of student work samples (Benedict et al., 2023).

Based on the foregoing, the evaluation of basic education is important for several reasons. First, it helps identify areas where the implementation of educational policy is succeeding or falling short so that improvements can be made. Second, it provides accountability for educational institutions by demonstrating their effectiveness to stakeholders such as parents, policymakers, and funders. Third, it helps ensure that resources are being used efficiently by identifying areas where investments can have the greatest impact on student learning outcomes. Therefore, this paper relied on the use of secondary data to evaluate the trends and dynamics of

basic education in Singapore in the areas of curriculum design, teaching methods, and student achievement; pre-service teachers' training, teachers' professional development, and teachers' effectiveness; as well as school leadership and community participation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Conceptualizing the Trends and Dynamics of Basic Education in Singapore

Basic education in Singapore is a highly prioritized and well-structured system that has undergone significant changes over the years. The Ministry of Education (MOE) is responsible for the administration and development of basic education in Singapore, which includes primary, secondary, and pre-university education (KWEK et al., 2022);(Y.-J. Lee & Ho, 2022). One of the key trends in basic education in Singapore is the emphasis on developing students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills (Y. S. Ong et al., 2023). This is achieved through a curriculum that focuses on inquiry-based learning, where students are encouraged to question, analyze and evaluate information. The curriculum also emphasizes the importance of creativity, collaboration, and communication skills, which are essential for success in the 21st century. Another trend in basic education in Singapore is the integration of technology into the learning process (Kong et al., 2014).

The Singapore MOE has made significant investments in technology infrastructure and resources to support digital learning. This includes providing students with access to digital devices such as tablets and laptops, as well as online resources and platforms for learning (Y.-J. Lee & Ho, 2022). In recent years, there has also been a growing emphasis on personalized learning in basic education in Singapore (Gabriel et al., 2022). This involves tailoring teaching methods and materials to meet the individual needs and interests of students In Singapore, the MOE has introduced various initiatives to support personalized learning, such as the Learning Support Programme (LSP) for students who need additional help with their studies (Y.-J. Lee & Ho, 2022);(KWEK et al., 2022);(Poon, 2022). The dynamics of basic education in Singapore are shaped by various factors such as demographic changes, globalization, and technological advancements. The country's aging population has led to a decline in birth rates, which has resulted in a smaller student population (Tham et al., 2023);(Azzali et al., 2022);(Leong et al., 2022). Similarly, referring to the dynamics of globalization as well as the aging population regarding Singapore's basic education, Soo (2023);Virág (2022) as well as Swee-Hock and Yun (2014) remarked that globalization and an aging population have also had an impact on basic education in Singapore.

The authors observed that as a result of the dynamics of globalization and the rapidly aging population in Singapore, there is increased competition and a greater need for internationalization. Thus, Singapore's MOE has responded by promoting global awareness and cultural understanding through initiatives such as overseas immersion programs and partnerships with international schools (Anderson, Jafari-Sadeghi et al., 2022);(Swee-Hock & Yun,

2014). It is therefore appropriate to note as much as basic education in Singapore is an embodiment of a productive learning environment and a unique prototype of developing and effectively implementing an inclusive basic educational system, it is not without trends and dynamics such as students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills (curriculum design, student achievement), the integration of technology into the learning process (curriculum design, teaching methods), personalized learning (teaching methods, special needs, student achievement), optimizing teaching resources (pre-service teachers' training, teachers' professional development, teachers' effectiveness) and internationalization (school leadership, community participation) with their pace and the challenges that come with it. Thus, the following is discussed in connection with this: (1) Trends and dynamics of curriculum design, teaching methods, special needs, and student achievement in Singapore's basic education. (2) Trends and dynamics of pre-service teachers' training, teachers' professional development, and teachers' effectiveness in Singapore's basic education. (3) Trends and dynamics of school leadership and community participation in Singapore's basic education.

B. Trends and dynamics of curriculum design, teaching methods, and student achievement in Singapore's basic education.

Singapore's basic education system has been internationally recognized for consistently achieving exceptional results in international benchmarks such as the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) (Cheng & Yeo, 2022). The success of Singapore's education system can be attributed to several factors in curriculum design, teaching methods, and a focus on student achievement. According to National Center on Education and the Economy, the Singaporean MOE is at the helm of designing and overseeing the execution of the Singapore curriculum. This strict and centralized approach has proven itself beneficial in providing quality education to students. Several components accentuate this success, including an emphasis on core competencies, a flexible, adaptive curriculum suited for 21st-century needs, effective teaching methods, as well as high expectations driven by comprehensive assessment systems. Moreover, bilingualism, mathematics, science, technology, and skill sets such as critical thinking problem-solving communication collaboration, and creativity are primarily focused on.

It is these elements that reinforce success within the globalized society we live in today. In 2013, the SkillsFuture framework was introduced by the Singapore MOE to foster lifelong learning skills; including communication, critical thinking, and problem-solving, thereby ensuring students are prepared for the ever-changing job market (Soo et al., 2023). Also, to cater to the diverse needs of the student population, the curriculum has been designed to be adaptive, flexible, and responsive. The different tracks and streams such as the Express, Normal Academic, and Normal Technical streams offer varying levels of support to suit the abilities of the students (Zhang et al., 2022);(C. H. Ong & Dimmock, 2013). With this approach, students are provided with

a suitable pace of learning and support that meets their specific needs. Similarly, KWEK (2022) remarked that the teaching methods employed in Singapore's basic education system have evolved over the years to become more student-centered, interactive, and engaging with an initiative such as Teach Less, Learn More (TLLM).

The TLLM initiative emphasizes quality in teaching and learning experiences. Teachers are encouraged to minimize direct instruction and focus more on engaging students in active learning, with a greater emphasis on higher-order thinking skills (KWEK et al., 2022). More so, instead of the traditional chalk-and-talk approach, Singapore's teaching methods now focus on group work and cooperative learning strategies. This fosters teamwork, communication, and collaboration skills among students (Pang et al., 2018). Teachers in Singapore often employ the small-group instruction technique, in which a class is divided into smaller groups to facilitate focused, targeted, and scaffolded learning experiences. The basic education system in Singapore is also making the shift towards inquiry-based learning, where students are encouraged to ask questions, explore, and discover answers through problem-solving and critical thinking exercises (Y.-J. Lee & Ho, 2022). Low (2023) added that Singapore's teaching methods have evolved to reflect changes in the education landscape. In the past, teaching was largely lecture-based, with teachers delivering information to students who then memorized it for exams.

In the same vein, Nah (2022) submitted that Singapore's education system places a strong emphasis on inclusivity and ensuring that students with special needs receive appropriate support. The Singapore MOE has been actively promoting inclusive education and has introduced various initiatives to support students with special needs (M. E. Wong & Lim, 2021). In 2019, the Singapore MOE announced that all primary schools would be equipped with special education needs (SEN) rooms to support students with special needs (Lim et al., 2022); (Nah et al., 2022); (Poon, 2022). The Singapore MOE has also been promoting the use of assistive technology to support students with special needs. Recently, the Singapore MOE launched the Special Education Assistive Technology (SEAT) program to provide students with assistive technology devices such as communication aids and learning software (Michael & Lee, 2021). In 2019, the Singapore MOE also announced that coding would be introduced as a compulsory subject in primary schools 2020.

Faragher (2021) added that the foregoing contributed to the global perception of Singapore's basic education system as having high student achievement. The Singapore MOE has also been promoting a holistic approach to education that focuses not only on academic excellence but also on character development. In 2015, The Singapore MOE introduced the Desired Outcomes of Education (DOE) framework, which outlines the desired outcomes of education, including values such as respect, responsibility, and resilience (3Rs) (Ikeda, 2023); (Goodwin & Low, 2020); (Gurr & Drysdale, Lawrie, Wang, 2016). More so, the Singapore MOE has been promoting the development of students' social-emotional competencies (SEC) through initiatives such as the Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) curriculum (Liem et al., 2017).

It is worth noting that there has been a notable shift towards active learning in basic education, where students are encouraged to engage in discussions, collaborate on projects, and participate in hands-on activities. This shift has been emphasized by educational experts such as (Dzerviniks, 2023);(Wakhata et al., 2023). Additionally, technology has become a significant part of modern teaching methods, with Singapore investing heavily in educational technology. Many basic schools in Singapore have implemented interactive whiteboards, tablets, and other devices to facilitate learning (Shen et al., 2023). The integration of technology in classrooms aims to enhance the learning experience of students by providing them with access to online resources, simulations, and other tools that aid their comprehension of complex concepts. This is in the same vein as Goodwin and Low (2020) that the focus on student achievement is intrinsic to the success of the Singapore education system in such a way and manner that the culture of high expectations is pervasive in Singapore's education. Parents, teachers, and the wider society all value and expect academic excellence through a comprehensive assessment system, which motivates students to strive toward success.

According to Wong (2017), to measure students' knowledge and skills, the Singaporean basic educational system relies on assessments ranging from formative evaluation — performed to detect weaknesses in learning — to high-stakes exams like the Primary School Leaving Examination. Additionally, teachers are expected to stay up-to-date with advances in pedagogical knowledge and practices by participating in continuing education programs. Moreover, meritocracy is widely adopted since it rewards those who exceed expectations and fosters competition among peers (Teng et al., 2018). These measures combined with a curriculum that focuses on core competencies and 21st-century skills, as well as engaging teaching methods have given basic school students in Singapore the tools they need to thrive both locally and internationally.

C. **Trends and dynamics of pre-service teachers' training, teachers' Professional Development and Teachers' effectiveness in Singapore's Basic Education**

Central to the remarkable success of the education system in Singapore is the focus on fostering high-quality teachers to deliver effective education. A good number of the literature revealed that in the basic educational system of Singapore, there is an emphasis on pre-service teachers' training, teachers' professional development, and teachers' effectiveness (Lekhu, 2023);(Noorani, 2022);(Sarvi, 2022). According to Low (2011), pre-service teacher training has since become a crucial aspect in setting the basic education system of Singapore on the path of consistent progress. Noorani (2022) observed that in Singapore, the National Institute of Education (NIE) plays a critical role in the initial training of future educators. The NIE offers a Diploma in Education program, catering to primary school educators, and a Bachelor of Arts/Science in Education for secondary school educators. Emphasis is placed on the development of content knowledge as well as a pedagogical understanding of effective teaching

practices. Moreover, student-teachers are required to undergo teaching practicums to apply the theoretical concepts they acquire in the classroom context (Nazeer-Ikeda & Gopinathan, 2022);(Sarvi, 2022). This is in the same vein as Yang and Tan (2022) that pre-service teacher training in Singapore is rigorous and comprehensive. All teachers are required to have a bachelor's degree in education from one of the NIE institutions.

The program is designed to provide teachers with a solid foundation in pedagogical theory and practice, as well as subject-specific knowledge. The curriculum includes coursework in areas such as child development, curriculum design, assessment, and classroom management. In addition to coursework, pre-service teachers are required to complete a specified number of weeks of practical teaching experience in schools (Sukmawati, 2022). Daum (2022) submitted that another trend in pre-service teacher training is the emphasis on developing teachers' cultural competence. Singapore is a highly diverse society, with a mix of ethnicities and cultures. As such, teachers need to be able to understand and appreciate the cultural backgrounds of their students. The NIE curriculum includes coursework on multicultural education and diversity, as well as opportunities for pre-service teachers to engage with diverse communities including different educational institutions. Gopinathan and Loh (2023), in agreement with Tan and Low (2023) as well as Hung (2022) acknowledged that the sustained collaboration between NIE and educational institutions, such as schools and universities, ensures a coherent and relevant curriculum that caters to the needs of Singapore's evolving education landscape.

Besides pre-service training, the professional development of in-service teachers is a priority in Singapore. As the landscape of education shifts, teachers are required to continually update their skills and knowledge to maintain effectiveness in their classrooms (Tonga et al., 2022). The Singapore MOE promotes a culture of continuous learning through structured professional development pathways. Teachers are also encouraged to pursue postgraduate studies and attend various workshops and seminars to deepen their expertise (Darling-Hammond, 2017);(Goodwin et al., 2017). The professional development support from schools and the Singapore MOE ensures that teachers are equipped to adapt to emerging challenges in delivering quality education (Goodwin et al., 2017). This is in line with National Gallery Singapore that Singapore places a strong emphasis on ongoing professional development for teachers. The government provides funding for teachers to attend workshops and conferences, as well as opportunities for collaborative learning through networks and communities of practice. Hairon (2020), in consonance with Darling-Hammond (2017), Arellano (2015), Clark (2012), and Tee Ng (2012), added that there is also a strong culture of mentoring and coaching among teachers, with experienced teachers often taking on the role of mentors for new teachers. Similarly, Wang (2015) remarked that in addition to new teacher mentoring, Singapore places a strong emphasis on developing teachers who can take on leadership roles within their schools and communities. This includes opportunities for teachers to participate in leadership training programs and take on leadership roles within professional organizations. Another essential aspect of Singapore's

basic education system is the focus on teacher effectiveness. The notion of teacher effectiveness encompasses various dimensions, including lesson planning, instructional delivery, classroom management, and assessment (Reddy & Reddy, 2014);(Jensen, 2012);(Stronge et al., 2011). These aspects are continually scrutinized and refined to ensure optimal learning outcomes for students. One notable initiative in evaluating and enhancing teacher effectiveness is the Enhanced Performance Management System (EPMS) (Gareis, 2021).

The EPMS is a growth-focused appraisal mechanism designed to identify teachers' strengths and areas for improvement. It is used to target professional development opportunities for every teacher. It incorporates multiple tools to assess teacher performance, such as classroom observation, student feedback, self-appraisal, and peer review. Feedback and recommendations for improvement are provided, and the process aims to ensure that teachers maintain high standards of professional practice. This goes in line with Rink (2013) and Darling-Hammond (2017) that the effectiveness of Singapore's teaching force is measured through a variety of means, including student achievement scores, feedback from students and parents, and classroom observations. Teachers are expected to continually reflect on their practice and make adjustments based on feedback from their peers and supervisors. The government also conducts regular reviews of the education system to ensure that it remains effective and relevant.

Notably, there has been a growing emphasis on the role of technology in education in recent years. As such, Singapore's MOE has rolled out initiatives to support teachers in integrating technology into their pedagogy (Churchill et al., 2018). The infusion of information and communication technology (ICT) into teaching practices not only enhances learning experiences for students but also expands the repertoire of skill sets and knowledge that teachers bring to their profession. According to Benita (2021), in terms of teacher support and effectiveness, one trend in Singapore is the increasing use of data-driven approaches to teaching. Teachers are encouraged to use data to inform their instructional decisions, such as identifying areas where students may need additional support or adjusting their teaching strategies based on student performance. This has led to a greater emphasis on assessment and evaluation in the classroom.

Al-Busaidi and Al-Shihi (2012) added that one trend in pre-service teacher training in Singapore is the increasing use of technology to support learning. For example, NIE has developed an online platform called Learning Management System (LMS) that allows pre-service teachers to access course materials, participate in online discussions, and submit assignments electronically (Al-Busaidi & Al-Shihi, 2012). This has made it easier for pre-service teachers to access learning materials and collaborate with their peers, regardless of their physical location.

D. Trends and dynamics of school leadership and community participation in Singapore's basic education.

In Singapore's basic education, one of the key drivers of success is the synergy between school leadership and community participation. Singapore has managed to achieve an excellent

blend of systemic efficiency and outstanding outcomes in its educational framework. This success can be attributed to a multi-pronged approach that encompasses strong school leadership and the continuous engagement of the community (Dimmock et al., 2021);(Kennedy, Wade et al., 2023);(Gurr & Drysdale, Lawrie, Wang, 2016). According to Dimmock (2021), the foundation of Singapore's basic education success is deeply rooted in the intricate dynamics between strong school leadership and vibrant community participation. Both aspects have a symbiotic relationship that enables schools to succeed and improves overall societal well-being. As Singapore continues to enhance its educational landscape in the 21st century, this collaborative approach will remain integral to generations of learners who will be nurtured to contribute positively to the nation and global community.

Similarly, Gurr and Drysdale (2016) observed that in recent years, there has been a shift towards a more collaborative approach to school leadership in Singapore. This approach involves working with teachers, parents, and other stakeholders to develop a shared vision for the school and to implement strategies to achieve that vision. School leaders are encouraged to be more open to feedback from stakeholders and to involve them in decision-making processes. Seow (2020) admitted in consonance with the Association of Persons with Special that recent educational reform in Singapore has placed an increased emphasis on the development of 21st-century competencies, focusing on character and citizenship education (CCE) to nurture well-rounded and discerning individuals. School leaders play a critical role in nurturing such competencies by promoting a culture of shared vision, values, and purpose. An example is the development of the 'MP3@CC' (Third Master Plan for ICT (MP3) at 21st Century Competence) framework that seeks to integrate moral, performance, and creative values in students (Seow et al., 2020).

School advisory committees (SACs) and school management committees (SMCs) are other vital channels that encourage community participation in Singapore's basic education Fuchun Primary School, Association of Persons with Special Needs,. These committees are responsible for integrating community expertise, aspirations, and resources to support schools in non-academic areas, such as infrastructure development and fundraising initiatives. Such collaborations enable holistic school development while ensuring accountability and financial transparency within the school system.

Another critical trend in Singapore's basic education is the promotion of active parental involvement. Parent support groups (PSGs) are a crucial part of this engagement strategy, where families play an active role in supporting school initiatives, events, and programs (KWEK et al., 2022). These partnerships enable parents to contribute to the educational ecosystem in meaningful ways, enhancing their children's learning experiences and fostering a sense of ownership in the education process. This aligns with Manzon (2015) that PSGs are a well-known practice in the educational system of various countries to help parents navigate their roles in their children's education.

In Singapore, Manzon (2015) noted that PSGs have been widely recognized as important partners in education. Research has shown that PSGs have a positive impact on the education system, as well as on the families and communities they serve. PSGs in Singapore offer a range of services, including volunteering, fundraising, and organizing educational workshops and events (Frewen et al., 2015);(Manzon et al., 2015). These activities not only support schools but also create a sense of community among parents, which can positively impact the social and emotional development of their children. PSGs have also been found to help bridge the gap between home and school, as they provide a direct link between parents and educators (Frewen et al., 2015);(Yuen & Cheung, 2014). Also, studies have found that parental involvement can have a significant impact on student achievement, particularly in areas such as literacy and numeracy (C. G. Lee & Jeynes, 2023);(Soo et al., 2023).

E. Lessons for Education Policymakers, Planners, and Administrators in Developing Countries

Covering the different bases of education policymaking- planners and administrators in developing countries can look to Singapore for successful strategies. This is in tandem with Darling-Hammond and Rothman (2017) that developing countries face numerous challenges when it comes to education policymaking and implementation, but they can look to Singapore for guidance on successful strategies. Following the analysis provided in this paper, Singapore's education system is built on the foundation of meritocracy, which provides equal opportunities for those who prove themselves capable. In ensuring meritocracy in the light of having students who prove themselves capable, Singapore invested in mechanisms that discourage intellectual theft by addressing plagiarism and examination malpractice. It is also unheard of that there is any form of cultism among students in Singapore's basic schools. Thus, developing countries must embrace the positive school culture of meritocracy that is void of plagiarism and examination malpractices in basic schools. Rising cases of peer bullying and cultism menace in basic schools must be addressed holistically. This approach will ensure that the best and brightest students are given the chance to excel, regardless of their socioeconomic status.

Another crucial aspect of Singapore's education system to learn from is the investment in quality teachers. Singapore places a high value on recruiting highly qualified educators who are passionate about their work. This investment in teachers has resulted in a highly skilled and motivated workforce that is dedicated to providing the best possible education to students. Singapore's Teach Less, Learn More initiative has also been instrumental in putting classroom instruction at the forefront of learning. This approach encourages teachers to focus on quality over quantity, allowing students to learn at their own pace and ensuring that they fully understand the material before moving on. Flexibility and adaptability are also key features of Singapore's education system. The country's focus on 21st-century skills demonstrates its commitment to staying current and relevant in a rapidly changing world. This adaptability has allowed Singapore to remain at the forefront of education innovation and to continually improve

its education system. Singapore's robust tracking and assessment system is another crucial element of its education system.

This system links educational outcomes with economic demands, ensuring that students are prepared for the workforce and that the country's economy remains strong. This goes in line with The World Bank that education is integral to sustainable economic growth in developing countries. To this end, Singapore provides an exceptional example of an education system optimized for progress, with continuing investment in infrastructure, resources, and teacher training. Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development added that high-income countries know that adapting curriculum to stay current requires more than just regular review; they must also integrate new methodologies and skills areas into the teaching practices. This approach has been instrumental in Singapore's economic success and has made it a model for other countries to follow. Damon (2016) corroborated the foregoing that developing countries must ensure that they have the necessary infrastructure, resources, and teacher training to support their education system. By looking to Singapore for guidance, developing countries can create an education system that is optimized for progress and sustainable economic growth. Moreover, strong institutional support is essential for the success of educational initiatives. Ultimately, as observed from the trends and dynamics of Singapore's basic education system, the success of educational initiatives relies heavily on strong institutional support in terms of planning and assessment, so developing countries must ensure that this is a part of their strategy.

CONCLUSION

Singapore's education system sets a high standard and empowers students to achieve the highest level of excellence through its merit-based approach. This is made possible by a range of formative and summative assessments that identify strengths and weaknesses, allowing teachers to provide targeted support to students. In addition, the government of Singapore sees education as the country's socioeconomic oxygen. As such, efforts are in top gear to ensure that educational infrastructures are in place and up to date while teachers are supported with continuing education opportunities, enabling them to keep up with the latest developments in. pedagogical theory.

The trends and dynamics of the basic education curriculum also foster 21st-century skills and core competencies, while teaching methods ensure an engaging learning experience at each level. The leadership culture within Singaporean schools is a centralized system of diversity. This approach works to promote effective decision-making on both a small and large scale. As communication is key in bringing the entire team together, successful policy implementation depends on proper resources and objectives outlined to keep the focus directed towards success. Through this centralized model, Singapore schools work towards stimulating growth in the development of positive policies. These progressive trends and dynamics in Singapore's basic

education system have enabled students in Singapore's primary and secondary schools to excel not only in their own country but also in the international arena

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